IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the second full paragraph on page 42 to read as follows.

In another embodiment of the invention, one or more chemically non-reactive (heterologous) amino acid residues is inserted in Domain II not to function as a B-epitope but to reduce the recognition of the chimeric particle by antibodies circulating in the blood of patients infected with hepatitis B virus. In a preferred aspect of the invention the chimeric molecule contains a single amino acid insertion at residue position ~~75,~~ 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81 or 82, and most preferably at residue position 77. That inserted chemically non-reactive residue can be an alanine, leucine or isoleucine, and is most preferably an alanine residue. It can be desirable to render the particle less antigenic than the native HBc particle; i.e., recognized less well by anti-HBc antibodies resulting from HBV infection. One skilled in the art can use any number of amino acid residues and sequences inserted into Domain II to reduce the antigenicity.